

V. REMARKS

Reconsideration and allowance of the present application in view of the foregoing amendments and the following remarks are respectfully requested.

At the outset, applicant's counsel wishes to express his appreciation for the thorough examination of this application by Examiner Juba.

In the last Official Action, mailed September 8, 2004, the Examiner objected to claims 8-10 merely as being dependent upon a rejected base claim, but stated that these claims would be allowable if rewritten in independent form including all limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims.

Accordingly, by this Amendment, the following actions have been taken. Claim 1 has been amended to incorporate the allowable subject matter of dependent claims 7 and 8, and the latter claims have been canceled without prejudice.

As a result of these actions: parent claim 1, and claims 2-6, and 9-16 dependent therefrom all stand allowed.

Additionally, it will be noted that the claim objections voiced by the Examiner in the first paragraph of page 2 of the outstanding Official Action have been cured by suitable

amendment to claim 6, and to the language of claim 8 incorporated into claim 1. Hence, these claim objections should now be withdrawn forthwith.

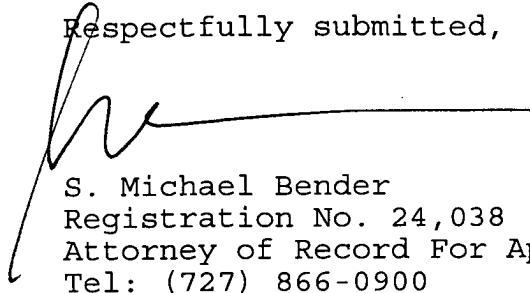
It is further noted with due appreciation that the drawings have not been objected to by the Official Draftsperson under 37 CFR 1.84 or 1.152 and have been accepted as filed by the Examiner.

All grounds of objection and rejection having been overcome by this Amendment, the application now is believed to be in condition for immediate allowance containing allowed claims 1-6 and 9-16, and such favorable action earnestly is solicited.

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The Examiner is encouraged to telephone the undersigned to resolve any issues still present in the application and to expedite the prosecution of the application, should the Examiner believe such a telephone conference would be helpful.

Respectfully submitted,

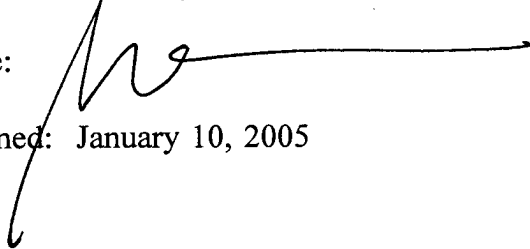


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VI. CERTIFICATE OF MAILING

I hereby certify that this **Amendment Under 37 CFR § 1.111** and the annexed **Petition and Fee for Extension of Time Under 37 C.F.R. 1.136(a)** are being deposited on **January 10, 2005** with the United States Postal Service with sufficient postage as first class mail in an envelope addressed to: Mail Stop Amendment, Commissioner for Patents, PO Box 1450, Alexandria, VA 22313-1450.

Signature:



Date Signed: January 10, 2005